

Questo fascicolo di «Teoria» propone una riflessione sulle domande di fondo che abbiamo ereditato dal passato, dalla filosofia greca e latina. Si tratta certamente di una riflessione

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compiuta alla luce delle risposte che nel corso della storia del pensiero a tali domande sono state fornite. Ma soprattutto è il tentativo di verificare se queste risposte sono state esaurienti o se restano margini per sperimentare ulteriori alternative per la filosofia, per dischiudere nuovi percorsi, al fine di comprendere sempre meglio noi stessi e il nostro mondo.

This issue of «Teoria» is a reflection on the past, on the philosophical questions that were first raised in Greek and Latin worlds. It is, then, a reflection made in the light of answers that the history of philosophical thought has provided to these questions. It is, above all, an attempt to verify whether these answers have been exhaustive, or whether there are further possibilities, other alternatives for philosophy to pursue, in order that we may better understand ourselves and our world.

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Prato, Giuliana Di Biase, Maria Benedetta Saponaro, Orietta Ombrosi.

- [Premise](#) Adriano Fabris, pp. 5-7

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- [Socrates and the *Ti Esti* Question](#) Kenneth Seeskin, pp. 9-21

Socrates is frequently identified with the well-known question *ti esti?* (What is it?). Most of his interlocutors are deceived by the extreme simplicity of this question and his detractors believe he does not know what an *arête* is. To this Socrates replies that he not only does not know what it is *arête*, but he has never met anyone who has done it. Using a term in ordinary speech does not insure that one has the kind of knowledge Socrates is seeking. The problem is not that *arête* is a technical or unfamiliar term but that as Socrates' discussion with Meno soon reveals, it is a disputed one.

- [Identity Through Time: the Ancient Origins of the Modern Debate](#) Francesco Ademollo, pp. 23-35

In this paper I argue for the following conclusions. (1) Some passages in Plato – most notably one in Diotima's speech in the *Symposium* – turn out, on close scrutiny, to put forward the view that ordinary sensible particulars are not, strictly speaking, identical through time, but rather

consist of a succession of impermanent objects similar to each other. (2) This view is interestingly similar, at least in some respects, to modern and contemporary views held by such authors as Hume, Reid, and Chisholm. (3) This view was ascribed by Plato to several ancient sources. (4) Therefore Aristotle's claim, in the *Categories* and elsewhere, that primary substances remain identical through time and change might be intended in opposition to Plato.

- [Socrates interrupted? Plato's Euthyphro](#) Robert W. Wallace, pp. 37-48

Sokrates is about to be tried for impiety; the prophet Euthyphro plans to prosecute his own father for homicide. Sokrates asks Euthyphro, "what is piety?" The quality of their subsequent arguments is often judged inadequate. I argue that the main purpose of this dialogue is defending Sokrates against the legal and other charges brought against him. Scholars praise its portrait of Sokrates, which I argue is different from Plato's other portraits on four points: an aristocrat, Sokrates shows class arrogance; his personality is unpleasant; he does not deny teaching; and he calls himself a sophos/sophist. Plato realized that these points, while historically accurate, were not the best defense of his teacher, so he cut short his inadequate dialogue and wrote the *Apology*, a far better defense and a literary masterpiece.

- [Ancient wisdom for the contemporary world: the case of propèteia \(rashness\)](#) Bruno Centrone, pp. 37-48

The paper focus on a question that has two sides: one is the question, whether ancient philosophy still has some significance with respect to strictly philosophical contemporary problems. The other side concerns its capacity to give answers to our everyday life problems, by offering valid models of ethical behaviour and making a contribution to the human search for happiness.

The control of propèteia, acquired through continuous exercises, is important to combat the imperative that still dominates the speed, becoming an ancient "therapy" for a contemporary "evil".

- [Covenant Lawsuits and Repentance: Albert the Great on Isaiah 1-3](#) Stefano Perfetti, pp. 61-74

The paper focus on the first three chapters of Isaiah. After recalling the results of modern biblical scholarship on the use of legal and forensic jargon in Isaiah (§ 1) and giving a thumbnail sketch of the traditions of Latin Christian exegesis in the Middle Ages (§ 2), I will examine passages of the commentary on Isaiah written by Dominican theologian Albert the Great in the 13th century (§ 3). The aim is to evaluate to what extent the concerns of the original biblical text, when filtered through the Latin Vulgate and through Christian foresight, are captured by the medieval exegete, to what extent Albert is able to understand the peculiar theme of the self-awareness of the history of Israel in the form of a legal contention between God and His people.

- [“Seeing for oneself”: The significance of Herodotus’ Histories for intercultural research](#) Flavia Monceri, pp. 75-90

This paper aims to show the relevance of some of Herodotus’ ideas for two core issues of contemporary theory and practice of intercultural research, that is to say the researcher’s position and the search for an adequate approach to (cultural) diversity. Such issues are still usually addressed, if inadvertently, from within the exclusive framework of Western modern science, although they can be considered as recurring problems to which different and competing solutions can be given in any time and place. Herodotus’ Histories suggest a different solution, based on the method of *autopsia* (“seeing for oneself”), so questioning the idea that only a particular understanding of “science” and the “scientific method” is the most correct one and therefore the only viable option to conceive of “research” in contemporary times.

- [Ethics and metaphorical image in the contemporary world. Ancient evocations.](#) Veronic a Neri, pp. 91-105

This paper aims to highlight how the notion of the “image” has gained momentum in visual studies, particularly in its metaphorical dimension. This dimension can be linked to Aristotle’s idea of metaphor. Furthermore, this dimension also refers to the importance of an ethical approach to the metaphorical image itself. The individual risks not acting “well” if he does not adopt a responsible interpretative and communicative approach. In the same time the ability to act of the metaphorical image and the ethical implications becomes important. There should also be an approach of co-responsibility which implies a choice on the part of all those involved: whether to go along with the metaphorical content of the metaphorical image and become an intermediary, or whether to relinquish it and choose not to become involved. Within the balancing of these two aspects resides the guiding principle of good metaphoric and iconic communication. Metaphorical images configure, through visions and original suggestions, new moral paradigms.

- [The Dynasty of Logos. Gorgias’ Fight for Helen](#) Andrina Tonkli-Komel, pp. 107-119

The article investigates the irresistible persuasive power of speech. As Gorgias stressed in his Encomium of Helen – “speech is the powerful master” (dynastes megas). It alters the mind and the persuaded cannot choose but is forced to obey. Gorgiasian “rhetoric” speech is neither music, poetic nor philosophic, it’s persuasive power comes neither from enchantment nor from revealed truth. To refute the bad reputation and to alter the traditional public opinion does not require proof, but rather the possibility of alternatives.

- [La buona argomentazione: Aristotele nostro contemporaneo](#) Alessandro Prato, pp. 121-132

The essay analyzes aristotelian theory of fallacy and its influence on modern linguistic philosophy from Locke to Bentham to investigate the mechanisms of incorrect and misleading reasoning and explaining the strategies of deceptive manipulation still present in public communication.

- [Mysticism and morality. Iris Murdoch's Platonic mysticism](#) Giuliana Di Biase, pp. 133-144

The paper aims to investigate Iris Murdoch's Platonic mysticism, setting it in the context of the contemporary debate between perennialists and constructivists. Like many perennialists, Murdoch believed in the existence of an essential link between mysticism and morality: this clarifies why she was fascinated by Plato's philosophy. She conceived of mysticism and morality as having the same essence, love intended as an eros purified from selfishness, and viewed mysticism as the perfection of moral life. Like constructivists, however, Murdoch rejected the idea that mystical experiences are essentially unitive: she used Plato's imagery of the eternal forms to emphasize that complete unity with the mystical "You" can never be achieved, and that this impossibility assures the existence of a relationship. Mysticism is essentially this relationship, for Murdoch.

- [An Antidote to Banal Society](#) Maria Benedetta Saponaro, pp. 145-158

Within our contemporary society of technological culture, the concept of banal evil has become "the culture of banal evil", an evil that is not sought intentionally, but is occasionally provoked, freely or for futile reasons; the evil of action or inaction, of indifference, is characterised by one fixed feature: the absence of thought or judgement. The teachings of Socrates, then as now, provide an antidote to the process of banalisation evident in current society, a factor that erodes both capacity for reflexivity and the scope of relational proximity, resulting in a subtle dehumanisation of humanity and a reification of the persona.

- [«Se i profeti irrompessero per le porte della notte». Una rilettura filosofica](#)

[contemporanea del profetismo](#)

Orietta Ombrosi, pp. 159-173

«If the prophets broke in through doors of night»: it is with this verse by the poet Nelly Sachs that I would like to introduce a philosophical reflection on prophetism that takes as its starting point certain leading figures of the *Ecole Juive de Paris* such as André Neher and Emmanuel Levinas.

Biblical prophetism, on the one hand, revisited through a contemporary lens according to the perspective of Neher's book *Prophètes et prophéties. L'essence du prophétisme*, will be reinterpreted in parallel and almost in chiasm with the perspective of an ethical prophetism, and even a prophetism "beyond ethics" as formulated by Levinas in the final parts of *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*

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